

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters During a Tour of the Nowhere Coffee Company in Emmaus, Pennsylvania

January 12, 2024

Iran

Q. Do you have a message for Iran, sir?

The President. I've already delivered the message to Iran. They know not to do anything.

Q. Are we in a de facto proxy war with Iran?

Q. Will you continue bombing the Houthis if the attacks don't stop, sir?

The President. Say that again.

U.S. Airstrikes in Yemen

Q. Will you continue bombing the Houthis if the attacks don't stop? Will you continue with the strikes, sir?

The President. We will make sure that we respond to the Houthis if they continue this outrageous behavior, along with our allies.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III

Q. Do you have confidence in Secretary Austin?

The President. I do.

Q. Was it a lapse in judgment for him not to tell you earlier?

The President. Yes.

Q. Are we in a de facto proxy war with Iran?

The President. Say again.

Iran

Q. Are we in a de facto proxy war with Iran?

The President. No.

Q. Are you willing to call the Houthis——

The President. Iran does not want a war with us.

Houthi Militant Organization in Yemen

Q. Are you willing to call the Houthis a terrorist group, sir?

The President. I think they are.

U.S. Airstrikes in Yemen

Q. Was the strike successful last night, sir?

The President. Yes. It was very—I don't think there's any civilian casualties. That's another reason why it's a success.

So, look, we're going to get a chance to talk, apparently, at the—after the fire station. So, rather than——

By the way, anybody want a coffee? It's on me. *[Laughter]* All right?

Q. I'll take a smoothie.

The President. You'll take a smoothie? Well, they're 6 bucks, but I'll do it anyway. *[Laughter]*

Seriously, if anybody here wants anything, I'll pay for it. Okay?

Co-owner Juan Vargas. That's very generous of you.

The President. And by the way, do we have all the stuff for the firefighters?

Mr. Vargas. Yes, we do, sir.

Co-owner Lauren Vargas. Yes, we do. Pastries and coffee all wrapped up ready to go.

The President. All right.

Mrs. Vargas. Yes.

Employee. We had such a run on business this morning though. They're getting low on supplies probably right now.

Mr. Vargas. We are.

Mrs. Vargas. We actually stopped selling food to the customers this morning so we could send food to the firefighters.

Mr. Vargas. No. We set it aside so that we would have it—*[inaudible]*.

Mrs. Vargas. We did. It's true.

The President. We paid you right?

Mrs. Vargas. Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

Mr. Vargas. Thank you for your generosity.

The President. But I'll be doing—talking with you all after the firefighters.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

By the way, we're almost in heaven. We're almost in Scranton.

Mrs. Vargas. Yes.

[At this point, the President continued his tour; no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:06 p.m.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Emmaus, PA.

Locations: Emmaus, PA.

Names: Vargas, Juan; Vargas, Lauren.

Subjects: Iran, regional involvement; Pennsylvania, Nowhere Coffee Co. in Emmaus; Pennsylvania, President's visit; Yemen, Houthi militant organization; Yemen, U.S. and coalition airstrikes.

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